

CLAIMS

1. A ticket dispenser comprising a housing having a bottom wall, a pair of side walls extending upwardly from said bottom wall, a front side wall hinged adjacent its bottom edge to said bottom wall at a first side so as to swing outwardly and downwardly from said side walls, a cover hinged to said bottom wall at a side opposite said first side and shaped to cover said bottom wall with space between said bottom wall and said cover, said space being adapted to contain a plurality of arrays of tickets in strips with individual tickets being delineated from one another by lines of weakness, a powered ~~drive~~ module in said housing said drive module being positioned adjacent said front side wall in a location to receive strips of tickets from said arrays, said module containing ~~drive~~ means for dispensing a predetermined number of tickets from a selected one of said arrays.

2. A ticket dispenser as in Claim 1 in which said space is located laterally from said drive module, and in which the ratio of the height of said housing to the distance between said front side wall and said opposite side of said bottom wall is substantially less than one.

3. A ticket dispenser as in Claim 1 in which said space is located at least partially underneath said drive module and the ratio of the height of said housing to the distance between said front side wall and said opposite side of said bottom wall is around one or greater.

4. A ticket dispenser as in Claim 1 in which said drive module includes a separator mechanism for separating one or more of said tickets from one of said strips before dispensing them.

5. A ticket dispenser as in Claim 1 in which said drive module comprises an enclosure having at least one inlet opening for admitting plural parallel ticket strips into said enclosure, at least one outlet opening for issuing tickets from one of

said strips, a drive motor driving a drive shaft, a plurality of input drive rollers rotatably mounted on a common shaft, selectively operable transmission means for selectively coupling said input drive rollers to said drive shaft for selectively feeding tickets in one of said strips through said module and out through said outlet opening.

6. A ticket dispenser as in Claim 1 in which said cover is at least partially transparent, and said cover forms a curved rear side wall for said enclosure, said housing comprising two halves joined together along a vertical line adjacent the inlet side of said drive module, and at least one housing extension element having bottom, top and side walls secured between said housing halves.

7. A ticket dispenser as in Claim 1 in which said space and said drive module are in superposed relation to one another.

8. A ticket dispenser as in Claim 7 in which said cover has a flat upper surface and said drive module is located above said space.

9. A ticket dispenser as in Claim 7 including a support structure in said housing for holding a ticket strip in the form of a flat stack at a substantial angle with respect to horizontal.

10. A ticket dispensing installation, comprising in combination, a ticket dispenser which has a housing having a bottom wall, a pair of side walls extending upwardly from said bottom wall, a front side wall hinged adjacent its bottom edge to said bottom wall at a first side so as to swing outwardly and downwardly from said side walls, a cover hinged to said bottom wall at a side opposite said first side and shaped to cover said bottom wall with space between said bottom wall and said cover, said space being adapted to contain a plurality of arrays of tickets in strips with individual tickets being delineated from one another by lines of weakness, a drive module in said housing said drive module being positioned

adjacent said front side wall in a location to receive strips of tickets from said arrays, said module containing drive means for dispensing a predetermined number of tickets from a selected one of said arrays, said cover being at least partially transparent to permit viewing of said ticket strips from a vantage point looking towards said opposite side of said bottom, a check-out counter in a store, said dispenser being mounted on said checkout counter with the opposite side of said housing facing the normal customer position at said check-out counter when purchases are being checked-out, and said front side wall facing the normal clerk's position at said check-out counter, the top of said cover being substantially flat to provide a convenient support surface on which to write.

11. A dispensing installation as in Claim 10 in which said space is located at least partially underneath said drive module.

12. A dispensing installation as in Claim 11 including a support structure in said housing for holding a ticket strip in the form of a flat stack at a substantial angle with respect to horizontal.

13. A dispensing installation as in Claim 10 in which said drive module includes a helical separator member spanning a plurality of different channels of said dispenser, and including a drive motor for selectively rotating said separator member to separate at least one ticket from any of said ticket strips, said drive module including means for moving each of said strips past said separator member, and for moving separated tickets out of said housing, and including electronic control means for inputting ticket selection and ticket quantity information into said drive module to cause said dispenser to dispense a selected number of tickets of one or more types from said dispenser.

~~14. A dispensing installation as in Claim 13 in which said electronic control means is selected from the group consisting of a point-of-sale terminal; a computer; and an on-line lottery terminal.~~

15. A ticket dispensing installation comprising, in combination, a ticket storage housing for storing a plurality of strips of tickets in said housing, said housing having side walls, a bottom wall secured to said side walls, and an at least partially transparent cover, as well as a first side wall and an opposed second side wall, said cover having a substantially flat upper surface, said housing containing a powered dispensing mechanism for selectively dispensing tickets from said strips out of said housing, a check-out counter for a store, said ticket storage housing being mounted on said checkout counter with said flat upper surface accessible to customers while they are having their purchases checked out.

~~16. An apparatus as in Claim 15 in which said housing forms storage space for said tickets underneath said dispensing mechanism, with space for passage of said ticket strips upwardly to said dispensing mechanism with said strips being visible through said cover.~~

17. An apparatus as in Claim 15 in which said dispensing mechanism includes a powered separator mechanism for separating at least one ticket from one of said strips before dispensing said ticket.

18. An apparatus as in Claim 15 including electrical selection means for selecting tickets from at least one of said strips and causing a pre-determined number of said tickets to be dispensed.

19. An apparatus as in Claim 18 in which said selection means is selected from the group consisting of; a point-of-sale-terminal; a computer; and an on-line lottery terminal.

20. A ticket dispensing display unit, said dispensing display unit comprising a rack with a plurality of shelves, a plurality of dispensers on said shelves, each of dispensers having a low flat-topped housing, a rear side wall and a front side wall, a powered dispensing mechanism, and a transparent cover forming a curved rear side wall for said housing, said shelves being spaced apart vertically from one another, the rear side wall of each of said dispensers being laterally offset from the rear side wall of the dispenser below it so as to minimize the area each of said dispensers which is visible to a person looking at said rear side-walls of said dispenser housings.

21. A unit display as in Claim 20 in which each of said housings has a height and a length from said rear side wall to said front side wall, in which said length is much greater than said height, and in which said length of said housings decreases as the vertical position of said housing goes higher, each of said housings comprising two halves joined together along a vertical line adjacent the inlet said of said drive module, and at least one housing extension element having bottom, top and side walls secured between said housing halves.

22. A display unit as in Claim 20 in which each of said powered dispensing mechanisms includes a separator mechanism for separating tickets from strips of tickets delineated from one another by lines of weakness and issuing said tickets through outlets in said front side wall, said housing providing space for storing and displaying multiple strips of tickets through said cover.

23. A display unit as in Claim 20 in which each of said housings has a bottom wall and pair of side walls secured to said bottom walls, said cover being hinged to said bottom wall to move away from said housing to permit access to the interior of the housing, said front side wall being hinged to said bottom wall to allow access to the area in said housing adjacent said front wall.

24. A display unit as in Claim 20 in which each of said housing has a guide roller near said rear side wall, a plurality of vertical dividers extending between said rear and adjacent said front side walls, said powered dispensing mechanism being located between said dividers and said front side wall in each housing.

25. A display unit as in Claim 20 in which said powered dispensing mechanism comprises a module with an enclosure, a drive motor and rollers in said enclosure and a separator member and drive means for driving said separator member.

